Boyfriend is always late and I'm frustrated

Dear Alice,

My boyfriend is always late when we have something planned. Not just fifteen minutes or so, but an hour or more! I don't know why I even wait, but I really care about him. He doesn't realize how much it bothers me. My question is, how can I get him to become more punctual?

Answer

Dear Reader,

It's frustrating when you rush around trying to get somewhere on time, only to be kept waiting by someone else running late. Showing up on time shows respect for another person, for her or his time, and her or his schedule. Your boyfriend's chronic lateness could be due to a lack of time-management skills, or to a lack of consideration for your time and calendar.

Have you clearly and calmly communicated to him exactly how you feel when you are kept waiting? Perhaps if he knew how his tardiness affects you, he'd make more of an effort to be on time. Since you really care about him, an honest conversation about this dynamic could help develop some mutual understanding? he can tell you why it's so hard for him to be on time, you can let him know how much it affects you when he's always late. Perhaps together you could come up with some strategies about how to make plans so that the timing works for both of you. A tip: you might want to avoid having this conversation when he's just shown up late and you're already frustrated. Instead, try to talk when you're calm and otherwise generally feeling satisfied with your relationship.

Time management tips abound in the related Q&As. Referring him to these or reading up on them yourself might offer some insight into strategizing for timeliness. Or, just asking him what you've asked here? how can I get you to be more punctual? may get you the answers you need before your patience really runs out.

Alice!

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